

Help Wanted by uppercasebread

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Summary:

It wasn't much of an ad, calling for a personal assistant with no description of who needed assisting or why, only that interviews would be held in suite 415 on the building's fourth floor. Will ran his thumb across the address printed on the bottom of the paper one last time, frowning as the already-flaking '36th street' came off onto his skin. He sighed, tucking the paper into his pocket

Help Wanted

The Oxford office building was a relatively new addition to Indianapolis. Standing straight and solemn in the center of town, its smooth reflective sides usually didn't offer much more than a place to quickly check your hair or your outfit and then continue on, never looking beyond the perhaps overly-attractive lobby.

Will didn't know much about the business itself besides two things: one; that his sister had worked there for a few years now and seemed to enjoy the job, and two; it was a building full of sharply dressed businesspeople that were too tall and spoke too quick and typically valued someone's monetary value over their actual life.

He had never wanted to work in an office building, instead dreaming of becoming a famous artist with his paintings and sketches hung up on walls for art snobs to look at and ponder the "deeper meaning" of (even though most of the time there wasn't one). It had only been when he'd paid rent and realized that all he had left in his apartment was a few bruised apples and half a loaf of bread to eat that he knew he needed a steadier income.

Will had found and cut out Oxford's advertisement from the newspaper, running his thumbs across the ink in contemplation so many times that the paper was starting to flake apart from itself. It wasn't much of an ad, calling for a personal assistant with no description of who needed assisting or why, only that interviews would be held in suite 415 on the building's fourth floor. Will ran his thumb across the address printed on the bottom of the paper one last time, frowning as the already-flaking '36th street' came off onto his skin. He sighed, tucking the paper into his pocket and turning his attention to his resumé, tucked and paperclipped neatly into an almost-empty manila folder. He chewed on the inside of his cheek as he looked at it, subconsciously adjusting his glasses with a finger as he tried to determine if he'd actually even stand a chance of getting the job.

He wasn't sure what experience personal assistants were supposed to have, besides personally assisting other people, but he hoped that his waiting and painting and deliveryboy-ing was enough to qualify him.

Suite 415 was located at the end of a very long hallway lined with other doors leading to other offices, though something told Will even before the door was opened for him that it was bigger than the rest.

He sat outside of the room for about twenty minutes in possibly the least comfortable plastic chair in the world. In that time, he managed to memorize the patterns of the scratches in the little brass plate beside the door with '415' printed on it, find the seams in the carpeting, and figure out that there was a little bit of water damage in the bottom corner of the conjoining wall to 415.

Just as he was contemplating how water could've already damaged the drywall in a building constructed only seven years prior, the door was opened.

The first person to exit was a tiny, twiggy boy who was shaking, and Will could have sworn he was crying. He bit his lip.

The next person to leave the room was there to bring him into what would be the most anxiety inducing two hours of his week. maybe his life. The woman ushering him into the room was a tiny little sparrow of a woman, with thin blond hair pulled back from her face and bright red horned glasses hanging from a chain around her neck.

She smiled a touch upon seeing Will, something that helped to quell the squirming anxiety in his gut.

"You can go on in," she said. Her voice was soft. "Mr. Wheeler is waiting for you, honey."

Will nodded maybe a little too robotically, standing quickly. Just as he began to wonder if the Mr. Wheeler he was about to meet was the same one he'd read about in the newspaper before, something about being a young successor to the title of CEO, he entered the room to the most beautiful and terrifying man he'd ever meet.

The suite wasn't as big as Will expected, though still much larger than the others on the floor. There was only one long window in the entire room, creating a chaotic blend of natural and artificial light that cast hard shadows on everything.

The desk in the room looked almost like a folding card table, and the man behind it was clearly the most expensive thing in the room.

He was wearing a crisp blue suit that fit more perfectly than any suit Will had ever seen, a brilliantly patterned tie snaking down between the lapels of the suit and contrasting brightly against the white of the dress shirt underneath it.

There was a fat white sticker on the suit's breast that had "Michael" scrawled across it in quick, blocky letters.

Mr. Wheeler, or Michael, as Will assumed, was sharp through and through. Sharp shoulders, sharp cheekbones, sharp eyes. His face was bright and young (though still clearly older than Will), covered in hundreds of freckles that only made him seem younger. His expression was set, clearly observing every movement Will made. His eyes, dark and intelligent, were trained diligently on Will's face. Will would be lying if he said he hadn't noticed a spark of intrigue in them the moment he entered the room.

Michael's fingers were as long and pale as the rest of him, intertwined together on the table, a silver band glimmering a bit distractingly by his index knuckle. His hair fell in thick dark curls around his face and shoulders, sleek and almost shimmering in the odd light of the room.

Will tried to swallow but found that his mouth had filled with sand, his tongue pumping uselessly before he uncomfortably cleared his throat.

Michael didn't stand, simply extending a hand for Will to shake (the one with the ring, Will noted). Will jumped to greet him, terrified to make him wait too long.

"Good morning." Michael said.

It was well past three in the afternoon.

"Good- good afternoon, sir." Will said.

Michael grinned at him, frustratingly perfect lips quirking up a bit. The spark of intrigue flashed through his expression again.

“I understand you’re here for the personal assistant position, correct?” Michael asked. His voice was solid, warm but sharp-edged.

Will nodded quickly, gingerly setting his resumé on the table.

“Yes, sir. I- I haven’t done anything like this before, um, b-but I’m confident I can do well.” Will said, his voice cracking.

Michael raised his eyebrows at Will before dragging the folder to his side of the table, flipping open the front page and reading in silence for a moment.

Will felt like his bones were swelling and slowly pulverizing every one of his organs for each second that the room remained silent. His heart also seemed to be swelling, each pump growing louder and more aggressive in his chest. He knew he had no experience in business in the slightest, and he knew that his resumé was rather barren. He was beginning to contemplate why he even came to this interview when Michael spoke up again, immediately crushing Will’s train of thought underneath a well-polished dress shoe.

“I know you already said you didn’t have much experience with personal assisting, but it seems like most of your previous employments contained some sort of serving aspect. That’s good.” He said, not looking up.

Will wasn’t sure whether he was supposed to respond or not, nodding once in his seat. His hands were sweaty as he gripped desperately at his left thumb with his right hand.

There was another agonizing moment of silence before Michael closed his folder and turned his eyes back to Will.

An anxious part of him expected to be yelled at, questioned as to how exactly he expected to get a job when he could barely handle five minutes of an interview. He blinked rapidly, making eye contact with Michael for a brief second before snapping his eyes to his lap and moving to readjust his glasses from where they didn’t need adjusting.

“Do you live nearby?” Michael asked.

Will nodded. "On 42nd."

"Good."

Will bit the tip of his tongue to avoid sighing in relief.

He could feel Michael's eyes burning into him, and he looked up again, focusing on a curl that laid almost too perfectly against Michael's cheekbone to at least feign eye contact.

"I'll be honest with you, you won't be doing much if you get this position. It'll be simple things, getting coffee, filing paperwork, taking calls and arranging meetings... it's not a way to be.. noticed, per se." Michael said. His eyes narrowed slightly on Will's face, and Will tried to cover up his anxiety by rubbing at the underneath of his left eye.

"That's- that's quite alright with me, sir. I do have to ask, though- Who.. Who am I going to be working under if I get this position?" He asked.

Michael didn't move for a terrible moment before another grin split across his face as a light chuckle escaped him, a sound Will didn't expect to want to hear again the moment it was over.

"Who do you think? Why else would a CEO be interviewing you? If you get this position, you'd be working under me." Michael said, with a nonchalance that shattered Will's confidence immediately.

Will blanched, picking at his sleeve under the table.

"I- didn't consider that," Will managed. "Sorry."

Michael looked at him curiously, the grin from before maintaining its strength.

He flipped Will's folder back open.

"Looking at your strengths, what do you personally think is your most valuable?"

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Will got home less than two hours later, his entire body feeling like it was made of sand. He collapsed on the floor of his apartment moments within entering, moaning at his cat's curious chirps in his ear.

"I'm going to die, Sugar." He said, lifting his head to look the fat calico in the face.

"I'm going to die and it's because the guy who might be my boss is super hot and it's going to kill me. Will you hold my funeral?" He asked.

Sugar only meowed, rubbing her face against Will's shoulder before skittering off to her food bowl. Will groaned louder, dropping his head back to the carpet.

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He got a phone call two days later in the middle of trying to make a sandwich out of marshmallow fluff, bananas, and slightly stale french bread.

Swearing, he glanced at a hand covered in marshmallow fluff before reaching to grab the phone with his other hand, cradling it between his shoulder and his ear.

"Hello?" He asked, tentatively biting fluff off of his thumb, knowing it would only make it more sticky.

"Is this Will Byers?" the woman on the other end of the line asked.

Will nodded, biting more fluff off his hand.

"Mhmm," He hummed into the speaker. "And who is this?"

"My name is Sheryll Burnes, I'm calling about the recent application you admitted to Oxford offices on the grounds of being a personal assistant."

Will choked on marshmallow fluff, scrambling to hold the phone in his opposite hand, as if to seem more proper.

“Um- Yes. Yes! Is- is- um, are there any updates?” He asked.

“Yes. Mr. Wheeler was rather pleased with your interview, and he’d like to have you meet him in his office on the top floor on Monday. 6 am, sharp, he says.” Sheryll said.

Will could hardly breathe.

“A-alright, thank- thank you, Sheryll.” He said, though she had already hung up.

Dropping the phone, Will looked at Sugar sprawled out on the floor. He sighed shakily.

“Oh my god,” he muttered. “Oh my god, my boss is hot and it’s going to kill me.” He moaned, sinking to his knees on the kitchen floor.

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Will’s alarm woke him up at 5:30 am, after a restful 15 minutes of sleep. He forced himself out of bed, fumbling for his glasses on the nightstand and shoving them onto his face, only keeping himself motivated to get ready by imagining what Michael would do to him if he was late.

He pulled a sweater over his dress shirt, tugging the collar out from underneath and making sure he looked clean and sharp enough.

He looked in the mirror and saw a huge dorky intern staring back at him.

Sighing, he decided that was good enough as his alarm clock ticked to 5:48.

He locked his bike into the rack in front of the office building, and ran to the elevator, slamming the button for the top floor as his watch read 5:54.

The top floor was situated with a few desks and employees scattered around, and two giant wooden doors at the other end of the floor. Assuming the giant doors were a good place to start, Will surged forwards as quickly as he could, shoving the inexplicably heavy doors

open just as the clock ticked to 5:57.

Michael wasn't facing Will or sitting at his desk, instead standing about five feet to one side, rolling a dart in one hand and throwing with the other. Will noticed that the board on the wall was covered in darts that were scattered just near the center, but not directly hitting bullseye.

He blinked, his brain obnoxiously nudging him to acknowledge the fact that Michael wasn't wearing his jacket. It was slung over the back of his almost comically large office chair, revealing the stark white dress shirt he wore underneath.

Will found himself mesmerized by the movements of Michael's shoulder blades and back as he effortlessly threw darts at the board. His shirt was perfectly fitted like the rest of his suit, making the muscles in his back even more obvious. Will dug his thumbnail into his index finger.

"You're late." Michael said, not turning around.

The last dart hit the direct center of the bullseye.

"B-but it's only- it's only 5:57.." Will mumbled.

Michael turned just enough to make eye contact with Will, his eyes narrowed.

"Early is on time. On time is late. Late is unacceptable." He said.

Will swallowed hard, tugging at his sleeves and trying to cover his hands.

"I'm- I'm sorry, sir. It won't happen again." He mumbled, wide eyes snapping to the floor.

"Good." Michael said.

Will's heart froze painfully in his chest as he heard Michael approaching, the clicking of his shoes the only sound between them in the office.

“The first thing I want you to do- besides make it here on time,” he said sharply. Will winced. “Is to set up your station. I don’t care what you put on it as long as it doesn’t get in the way.” Michael said, gripping Will’s shoulder with what was probably more force than necessary.

Will jumped, looking up to make eye contact and jolting as he found himself staring at Michael’s neck instead.

Blanching, he looked up to Michael’s face, realizing for the first time that he was almost a full foot shorter.

“Y-yes, sir.” He mumbled.

Michael’s lips twitched slightly.

“You don’t have to say ‘sir’ all the time. You know my name.” He said.

Will nodded, blinking rapidly as he tried not to seem so awkward.

“Of- of course, M-Michael, sir.” He said.

“Oh my god, just call me Mike.” Michael muttered, dropping his hand from Will’s shoulder and breezing past him to his desk.

“S-Sorry, I- I’m not, um, used to this..” Will said, turning to face Mike at his desk.

“I can tell,” Mike said. Will swallowed. “But it’s fine, just go set up your desk.” He said.

Will nodded quickly, cursing himself for being so stupid. He realized he’d been standing stock still in the center of Mike’s office for at least forty five seconds now, well past the stage where it wouldn’t be considered awkward.

Sighing and scrubbing at his face with his palm, he moved to leave the office.

He had his hand on the door when Mike spoke up behind him.

“Where are you going?” He asked, his voice heavy with exasperation.

The air rushed out of Will’s lungs.

“Um, I was going to go- set- set up my desk..” He said, pointing towards where the other desks on the floor were.

The office was silent. Mike raised his eyebrows, glancing down at his desk before looking sharply back up, rubbing at his face with both hands.

“Lord help me,” he muttered to himself. “Your desk is right there.” He said, pointing to a wide corner desk on the right side of the room.

Will dropped his hand from the door.

Silently, he moved to sit at his new desk, hiding the blotchy red blush that was beginning to spread across his neck and face behind his computer screen.

The desk was bare besides a phone, the computer, and a little pencil caddy. Will gently set the notebooks and paperwork he’d brought with him on the desk, trying to be as quiet as possible.

He had already blown it. If he wasn’t fired by the end of the day, he’d be fired by the next morning.

Sighing, he sunk into his chair and moved to log into the computer system.

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The office had been mostly silent since the disaster of a morning had happened, allowing Will to take his mind off of it and begin to file the paperwork Mike had dropped on his desk a few hours before.

He was startled out of his filing by Mike’s voice.

“Hey, can you run down the street and get me a coffee from the little store on the corner? just black.” He said.

Will stood maybe too sharply, nodding.

“Do you need anything else?” He asked.

Mike hummed to himself.

“Get yourself something too. I don’t care what, god knows i can cover it.” He said, rubbing at his eyes with a tired hand. He held out two bills folded together. Will nodded, taking the money with a touch of hesitation.

“Thanks.” Mike said, turning his attention back to the paperwork strewn across his desk.

Will nodded, exiting the office and glancing at the money in his hand.

He had only one thought as he made his way down the street:

who gives someone 40\$ for coffee?